
AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE
IN JAMAICA,
AND
COMPARATIVE TREATMENT OF SLAVES.

READ BEFORE THE
MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
OCTOBER, 1854.

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Sheppard, Moses -
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AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE
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THE cruelty of the Spaniards towards the Aborigines of the Island of Jamaica, has ever been the theme of just and strong indignation by Historians:—but the cruelties inflicted by British subjects upon the Africans in the same Island, as will be evidenced by the statistics hereafter shown, have never met with the reprehension they deserve.

It is true, Parliament has abolished Slavery, but how much of this measure was due to humanity, and how much to policy, is uncertain. The fact, that England for one hundred and seventy-nine years, tolerated the Slave trade, a system so cruel, and so destructive to the lives of its unfortunate victims, should forever silence all reproach on the part of British subjects against the United States, so far as Slavery in connection with the treatment of those held in bondage is concerned.

In the march of humanity, different motives may combine to impel the mass forward :—sympathy and policy may unite to effect a common object ; policy in the government, philanthropy in the people.

Formerly, English manufactures, to an immense amount, were introduced into the Spanish possessions in America, through Jamaica. The dismemberment of these possessions from Spain, opened the ports of Spanish America to the direct trade of England ; and Jamaica ceased to be profitable to her ; hence the reduction in the differential duties ; and what were those duties but a premium on slave labor ?—

Before the emancipation of the slaves in Jamaica, many of the owners of the Estates were deeply involved in debt, notwithstanding the premium in the form of protection ; and emancipation only hastened their ruin.

England, therefore did not abolish Slavery in the West Indies, until it had become *unprofitable*.

The Slavery in disguise now being introduced into the Island of Jamaica, called Apprenticeship, will be more profitable :—nearly the whole amount of capital heretofore employed in the purchase of slaves, will be saved. It is obviously more economical than the former system, and may enable the planters to retrieve their circumstances.

English writers tell us with exultation, that the British drum and fife may be heard successively, until the music goes round the world ;—but they omit to tell us, that the groans of oppressed humanity, the cries of infant innocence, and the shrieks of virgin purity, mingle with the sounds that herald the dominion of the British Isles.

There is another aspect of the subject, which it would be well for the Parliament of “Exeter Hall” to consider, whenever American Slavery becomes a matter for anathema. *Slavery in this country had its origin in the commercial policy of England.* Under the fostering protection of the British Government, the trade in African slaves which supplied all her Colonies, America included, was begun and continued ;—and continued too, in many instances, against the earnest and repeated remonstrances of the Colonists.

Here is the origin of American Slavery ;—and it exhibits an effrontery unparalleled, for England, with all her severities in the East Indies ; with the toleration of Slavery in Jamaica, for one hundred and seventy-nine years ; and the enormous sacrifice of life it entailed upon its miserable victims, and with the continuance of the Slave Trade, with all its

horrors, for so many years, forcing its evils upon unwilling Colonies, to be uttering reproaches against the citizens of the United States, for the existence of a system fastened upon them, by her own arbitrary acts.

That Slavery here, is not what English Abolitionists profess to believe, nor what in reality it has been in their own Colonies, is clearly proved by the following statistics, collected from their own writers.

The number of slaves in the United States,

In 1850, was	3,204,089
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In 1790,	697,897
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Increase in sixty years,	.	.	.	2,506,192
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(Two millions five hundred six thousand one hundred and ninety-two;—)

The number of free colored people

In 1850, was	428,661
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In 1790,	59,466
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Increase in sixty years,	.	.	.	369,195
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(Three hundred and sixty-nine thousand one hundred and ninety-five.)

It is estimated that one-half of this increase of the free colored population was from emancipation of slaves:—and of course so far, it lessened the increase of the latter, and added to the increase of the former.

The number of slaves brought into Jamaica by the Spaniards during their possession of the Island, from 1509 to 1655, say in one hundred and forty-six years, was 40,000, (forty thousand.)

Of these, there were found by Penn and Venables, at the time of their conquest of the Island in 1655, only 1,500, (fifteen hundred.)

Now if 697,897 persons in sixty years amount to 3,204,089,—1,500 persons, in one hundred and seventy-nine years, by the same ratio, would amount to, 20,544

Add the number imported into Jamaica in one hundred and seventy-nine years, say from 1655 to 1834, (eight hundred and fifty thousand,) 850,000

And the amount will be, 870,544

The number of slaves found on the Island, at the time of the Emancipation in

Amount brought over, .	870,544
1834, was (three hundred twenty-two thousand four hundred and twenty-one,) <u>322,421</u>	

Showing a waste of human life under
British rule, as contrasted with the ratio
of increase in the United States, of . 548,123

(Five hundred forty-eight thousand one hundred
and twenty-three,) exclusive of any estimated
increase upon the eight hundred and fifty thou-
sand (850,000) who were imported, that would
have accrued under a humane system of treat-
ment.

In submitting these comparative results of British
Colonial slavery, with slavery in the United States,
it must not be supposed that the compiler of this
Exhibit is an advocate or friend of slavery. He is
not. The question we are considering, is not slavery,
but the comparative treatment of slaves.

His object is to show, that the odium of its intro-
duction here, and the evils that it has inflicted or
may inflict upon the United States, are chargeable to
England:—and that the iniquity of the institution
may be aggravated or lessened, according to the
manner in which the slaves are treated.

Under their treatment in the United States, upon an original stock of 697,897, (six hundred ninety-seven thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven,) they have increased to 3,204,089, (three millions two hundred and four thousand and eighty-nine,) while by their treatment in Jamaica, they were reduced in one hundred and seventy-nine years, upon a stock of 851,500, (eight hundred fifty-one thousand five hundred) to 322,421, (three hundred twenty-two thousand four hundred and twenty-one.)

This statement needs no comment. It exhibits Slavery in the British Colony of Jamaica, tolerated by the Parliament of Great Britain for one hundred and seventy-nine years sufficiently revolting, without dramatic skill to render the picture still more repulsive.

Again; we may assume, that allowing the 850,000 (eight hundred and fifty thousand) imported, and the 1,500 (fifteen hundred) Spanish slaves, making 851,500; forty-five years of the one hundred and seventy-nine, of equal productiveness with the American slaves, would give an increase of 2,931,450, (two millions nine hundred thirty-one thousand four hundred and fifty.)

Here we have a loss of 2,931,450 lives destroyed in embryo, infancy, and maturity, in the time intervening between the capture of the Island by Admiral Penn and General Venables, in 1655, and the period of Emancipation in 1834;—a number nearly equaling the population of the United States, at the period of its dismemberment from the British Empire.

Further;—in the capture of the slaves, the march of the Koffle to the coast, and on the middle passage, the smallest estimate is ten per cent. loss, until the slaves are landed in the West Indies. We must therefore add 85,000 (eighty-five thousand) to the 850,000, (eight hundred and fifty thousand,) making 935,000, (nine hundred and thirty-five thousand,) requisite, during the whole period of slave importations, to land 850,000 in Jamaica.

This gives a grand total of 3,016,450 (three millions and sixteen thousand four hundred and fifty) that perished in one hundred and seventy-nine years; or in round numbers, 17,000 (seventeen thousand) annually.

It results from these facts and deductions, that the evils and fatal effects of Slavery, consist as much in

the *manner* in which the slaves are treated, as in the *fact* of their being held in servitude.

The importation of slaves into the United States was not prohibited until the year 1808:—but very few were introduced; there were no sugar lands in the country; cotton was unknown as an article of commerce, and slaves were not wanted. The low estimate of ten per cent. loss on the importation of them into Jamaica, and the assumption that they were productive but forty-five years of the one hundred and seventy-nine, will more than balance the small number that were brought into the country.

A very important question presents itself here:—what is to be the future situation of the black man?—

The colored race have possessed a luxuriant soil, and balmy climate for unknown ages:—to these are added, now, the offer of civilization and its attainments, which they have never acquired. The capacity of the race for progress, will now be determined. The African family will decide for itself its position in the great family of mankind:—I say, decide for itself:—for it is not the acknowledgment

of the independence of Liberia, by one nation, or another nation, or by *all* nations, that will elevate the people of that Republic to the desired point;—*that* must be achieved by intellect and labor.

The division of the human race, called Caucasian, or Anglo-Saxon, and its numerous subdivisions, will not dispense with the luxury of Tropical productions;—they cannot produce them—therefore, if the black man will not furnish them voluntarily, it is to be feared, compulsory means will be adopted to compel him.

It is then apparent, that the black can render the white race tributary to them—this is *now* to be decided, and *forever*, in Liberia. Colonization in Africa, therefore, is an experiment far more important than the mere question of manumission.

It is an auxiliary in the elevation of the colored race, by transferring to them the knowledge possessed by a race that has preceded them in the march of civilization and its concomitant arts and sciences. If the colored race adopt them, and join in their onward progress, they will then be placed on an equality. Emancipation alone will not effect it; it is but a minor object, the gift of others; and can only have conferred upon its beneficiaries, the opportunity

of their ascending to equality. The colored man in his own domicil, and by his own energies must ascend to it. The facility is presented him, of emerging from the long and dark night of time in which he has been enveloped.

I have said, the crime of slavery consists as much in the manner, as the fact:—it is equally true of manumission. The merit of conferring it, and its value, depend upon the previous preparation for it. This is abundantly proved in the Island of Jamaica. It would be absurd, to suppose a person capable of understanding Algebra, who was ignorant of Arithmetic.

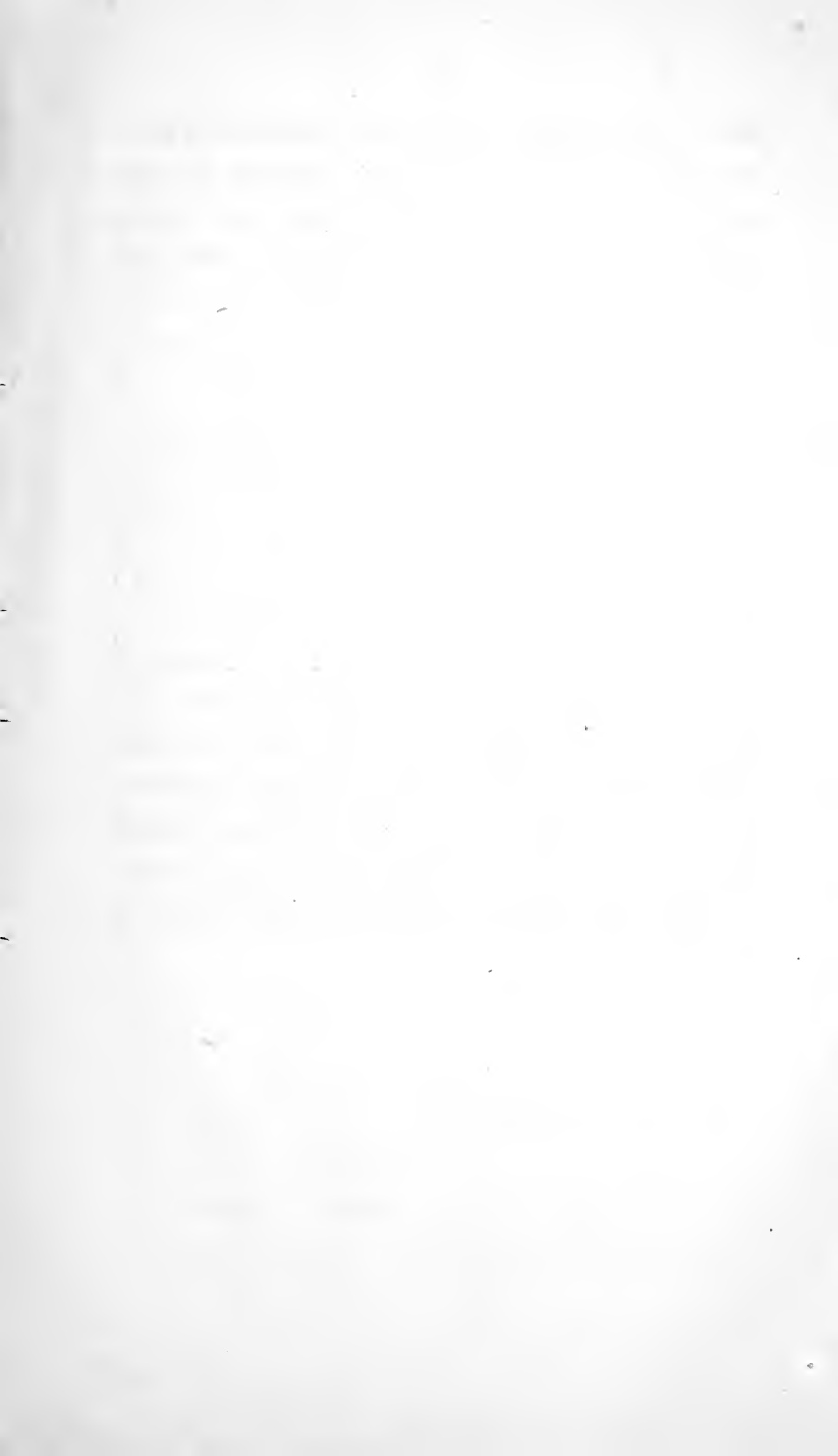
The Colonization Society, is in fact, an auxiliary to the elevation of the colored man. If it succeeds, it will guarantee the freedom of the colored race in North and South America, by deciding the long mooted question of the cheapness of free compared with slave labor; and thus rendering slaves valueless.

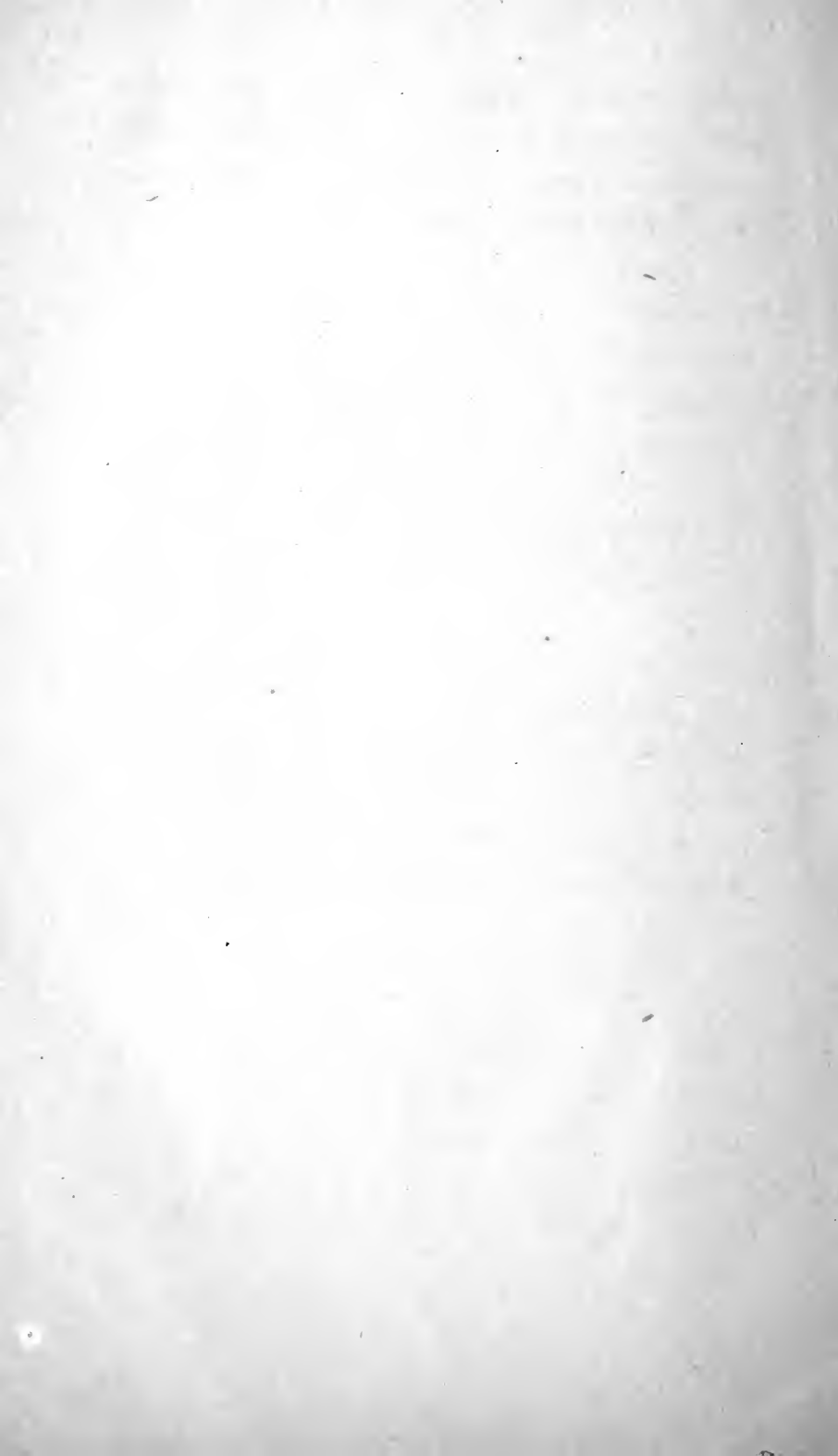
The psychological question that presents itself here, belongs to another department:—I will therefore, only add a sentence.

The native Africans have a plurality of local Gods; powerful, and as malignant as they are pow-

erful. What then must be their sensations, when a knowledge of the true God is unfolded to their minds?—when they are made acquainted with a Deity, not confined to lakes or chained to rocks ; and are taught that he is the friend of all?

The doctrine of equal civil and religious liberty after its rise, spread rapidly through wider regions than the “Roman Eagle overshadowed.” It could not be arrested by fleets or armies, for it pervaded *them* ; it was not stopped by seas or mountains, it passed over *them*. Like the magnetic influence, it spread from meridian to meridian ; and like that subtle fluid, it promises to wrap the globe from pole to pole. But the zones of the earth give character to their inhabitants ; and in the highest point of attainment to which the human family may progress, there will doubtless be a difference in the destiny of nations.





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